

THE MORNING NEWS

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Latin America has contributed greatly to Aruba's tourism growth

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Shocked Malaysia jet relatives have 'no hope left now'



BEIJING: A relative (C) of passengers on Malaysia Airlines flight MH370 cries after hearing the news that the plane plunged into Indian Ocean at a hotel in Beijing on March 24, 2014. (AFP)

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Aruba as example in the region on how to comply with ISPS

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AAA very pleased with their safety records as Airside Safety Week 2014 begins

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Eight killed, 108 unaccounted for in huge US landslide

Russia redraws its maps to include Crimea

MOSCOW (AFP) - Russia yesterday redrew its official maps to include Crimea after annexing the peninsula, even though the move has not been internationally recognised.

Maps on the Kremlin and government websites include Crimea, describing it as the "youngest region of Russia."

Several of Russia's most popular websites including the main search engine, Yandex.ru, have also changed their maps.

But on a parallel site for Ukrainian users, Yandex.ua, it continued to show Crimea as part of the Ukraine.

EU offers 2.5-bn-euro aid package for Latin America

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Latin America has contributed greatly to Aruba's tourism growth

ORANJESTAD-- Aruba looks back on a successful Annual (CATA) tourism conference. They celebrated the silver anniversary of CATA. It was back in 1989 that this conference was initiated when Aruba received only 55 thousand visitors from Latin America, a 16% of the tourists coming to the island.

According to CEO Ronella Tjin Asjoe-Croes, it was pioneers such as Rory Arends, Mirto Granadillo, Harold Malmberg, Annabela Peterson, Mario Arends and Adwina Arends and others

who believed in the Latin American market who made this conference what it is today. Today, 25 years later, Aruba received in 2013 a total of 267 thousand visitors from Latin America representing 27% of total arrivals.

Aruba received a record 979,256 visitors which is the equivalent of a growth of 8.3%. From the US, there was a growth of 4.1% and from Latin America this was 26%. From Europe there was a drop of 3.2% due to the economic challenges that Europe is facing.

According to the Aruba CEO, Venezuela is our biggest market from Latin America and has shown an increase of 31.3% in the number of arrivals during 2013. Brazil increased by 10.6%, Colombia with 7.5%, Argentina with 21.1% and Chile with a significant increase of 70.4%.

From Ecuador there was a decrease of 23% due to the cancellation of their charter flights in that market during 2012.

It was observed that a large number of Latin Amer-

ican visitors have chosen to stay in "vacation home rentals/villas" while visiting Aruba. Compared to 2012 here is an increase of 133%.

According to the Central Bank there was an increase of 5.2% with respect to income from tourism during the third trimester of 2013. AHATA also recorded a positive increase in the rooms (RevPar) of 3.2% reaching a total of \$158.14.

Ronella Tjin Asjoe-Croes had words of appreciation for the support and collaboration received from all who contributed to the success of the CATA program. She indicated that they are intent on working even more dynamically into the future.



Aruba as example in the region on how to comply with ISPS

ORANJESTAD -- Last week Minister Otmar Oduber met with the Maritime Security Committee to discuss different matters of importance related to national security. Reportedly, Aruba is being used as an example in the region on how to comply with the International Ship and Port Facility Security Code (ISPS).

According to the president of the commission, Dolfi Richardson, it is important to inform the Minister on the progress being made as well as to highlight the areas where they must put attention in the coming months.

According to Richardson,

because of the sensitive nature and confidentiality that must be maintained, it is not possible to report on the content of the meetings. What has been shared is that the meetings are in relation to the security of our harbor, and airport and to ensure that Aruba is complying with ISPS.

The last visit that Aruba received from the American Coastguard, they were very pleased with the progress made during the year. They are even using Aruba as an example to other countries in the region on how to be ISPS compliant.

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AAA is very pleased with their safety records as Airside Safety Week 2014 begins



Supervisor Charlotte Heemstad accepts for Delta Airlines



Delta Airlines Company of the Year Airside Delta Airlines Safety 2014



Company of the Year Airside Safety 2014 Employee of the year Adri Koolman and nominees with Jurgen Benschoop

The Aruba Airport Authority, (AAA) which administrates and runs the Reina Beatrix International Airport, yesterday morning opened their annual week of lectures,

seminars and workshops entirely dedicated to safety procedures on the tarmac, Airside Safety Week.

AAA CEO Peter Steinmetz and Director of Opera-

tions, Jurgen Benschoop, began by honoring individuals and companies with superlative safety records over the past year. AGS Ground Services had four nominees

for Employee of the Year, Sigmund Sylvania, Sally Da Costa and Walter Rincon, with Adri Koolman taking home the trophy for outstanding observance and practice of safety procedures. AGS CEO Osling Toppenberg was very proud of his employees.

Delta Airlines Supervisor Charlotte Heemstad and staffer Roxanne Rumnit were pleased to accept the trophy for Company of the Year from Chairman of the AAA Safety Committee, Eric Martijn.

The week's presentations began with a lecture by Jurgen Benschoop on the working of Airport Council International, ACI, a global cooperative of commercial airports. Benschoop is chairman of the ACI Safety Committee, and in that capacity, travels to airport conferences throughout the region, inspecting various facilities and discussing improving and advancing safety procedures.

ACI has 575 members around the world, operating 1751 airports, representing

95% of the global commercial air traffic. ACI-LAC, comprised of the Latin American and Caribbean airports, consists of 250 airports in 37 countries throughout the region.

Airport staffers unable to attend the lectures were able to follow proceedings on screens scattered through the airport via closed-circuit broadcasting. Topics to be covered range from the dangers of noise exposure to fueling safety procedures, Apron Management, Tasks of the Fire Department During Emergencies, with a practical exercise, to handling unauthorized runway incursions. The program is interspersed with social events and activities like a annual walkathon, which also encourage the workers to maintain a healthy mind in a healthy body. AAA is extremely proud of its excellent safety record, continually striving to improve conditions to guarantee the safety of works and passengers at the airport.

Mary Anderson honored by Aruba Tourism Authority



Recently, Mary Anderson was honored at the Tamarijn. Mary was granted the Goodwill Ambassador of Aruba certificate in commemoration of her 20 consecutive visits to our island. Mary and company just celebrated St. Patrick's Day followed by Aruba's Flag & Anthem Day at the Tamarijn. The ceremony was conducted by Jonathan Boekhoudt of Aruba Tourism Authority in presence of lifelong friends Mary made in Aruba. Picture shows Mary, her many friends and Mr. Bradley Versprey from the Tamarijn Beach Resort.

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Aruba Does, Bonaire Does, Curacao Does and The Netherlands Does: A huge success



ORANJESTAD -- Recently, the largest voluntary action of our Kingdom took place in Aruba, Bonaire, Curacao and the Netherlands where more than 9,000 jobs were done by civil society organizations.

March 21 and 22 was bustling with many charities of positive energy. Hundreds of thousands of volunteers rolled up their sleeves and took jobs that would otherwise stay behind.

The Aruba Does event - where 134 jobs were per-

formed - was inaugurated by Aruba Governor Mr. FJ Re-funjol. The event took place at Foundation Care Aruba where the bedrooms of the residents were painted. During the Bonaire Does event a total of 66 jobs were performed, while in Curacao, where this year the event was organized for the first time, it was welcomed with much enthusiasm and more than 130 jobs were done.

This year the organization received the help of King

Willem Alexander and Queen Maxima. The royal couple visited the children's farm 'Het Akkertje' in Rijswijk where they helped paint the stables.

Volunteers are the heart of many social initiatives. The Orange Fonds shows thru NLdoet how important active citizens are to society. Additionally NL doet contributes to a good image of volunteering. NLdoet also shows how fun volunteering can be.

Kia Soul awarded prestigious 'red dot' design award

New model has already received the 2014 'iF design' award



SEOUL -- The all-new Kia Soul has been awarded a prestigious 'red dot' design award, following in the footsteps of its stylish first-generation predecessor.

With its upright, confident posture, broad shoulders, iconic window shape and SUV ground clearance, the second-generation Soul was crowned winner in the 2014 'Product Design' category by the red dot jury, the same award earned by the original Soul in 2009.

This is the second major design award for the new Soul, following its success in the highly respected 'iF design awards' only few weeks ago.

The new Kia Soul was created by the Kia design team under the supervision of Peter Schreyer, President and Chief Design Officer of Kia Motors Corporation and Hyundai Motor Group. Schreyer was also responsible for the design of the original model, which was the first Korean car to receive a red dot design award in 2009. This first ac-

colade was followed by numerous other red dot awards, and the new Kia Soul is the eleventh Kia model to receive the prestigious prize.

The design of Kia's second-generation Soul is inspired by the Kia Trackster concept shown at the 2012 Chicago Auto Show. Similar to the concept, the production model features a large trapezoidal lower air intake, low fog lights pushed to the edges of the front bumper, Kia's signature 'tiger-nose' grille and the avant-garde design of the rear with the unique 'floating' body-coloured panel on the tailgate.

The high quality comfort of the interior significantly enhances the appeal of the second-generation model.

The new Soul is also the first Kia available with two-tone body colors (with an optional contrasting roof). Continuing the trend set by the first-generation model, extensive customization options are also available to customers.

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Aruba Marriott Resort is a proud partner of the first E-Aruba Seminar



Keirsin Tjon Pian Gi, PR & eCommerce Manager

PALM BEACH – The Aruba Marriott Resort is pleased to be a partner of the first E-Aruba Seminar, an event aimed at educating the public on new social media, digital marketing and entrepreneurship trends.

"Supporting the E-Aruba Seminar is part of Aruba Marriott's ongoing commitment to staying up-to-date with digital trends in order to continue to cater to the younger, tech savvy travelers of today, which is a significant market on the rise for the hospitality industry", highlighted Keirsin Tjon Pian Gi, PR & eCommerce Manager for Aruba Marriott Resort.

The seminar will take place on Saturday, April 5th at the Renaissance Convention Center and will host three recognized international

speakers; Andres Barreto, Richard Pollack and Ramon Ray, who will share their vast expertise on social media, digital marketing trends and entrepreneurship.

The Aruba Marriott Resort invites all business owners, entrepreneurs, professionals, students and everyone interested in learning more about these topics to attend the first E-Aruba Seminar! Visit www.e-aruba.com/register to register.

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Centro Hubenil Washington receives great volunteer assistance



NOORD -- The past weekend, the playground at the Centro Hubenil Washington received a lovely new paint job. The Center will be closed for 1 week to allow for

ample drying time, after which the children can return to play freely in their newly refurbished playground. Last Saturday and Sunday many volunteers tracked down to

the Center to do volunteer work.

On Friday four students and an EPI teacher began painting the entrance gate and on Saturday a mother and her

two children continued the job. They were able to salvage this gate.

On Saturday some 20 PriceWaterhouseCoopers employees arrived who took care of painting the entire playground. This volunteer action was made possible with funds from CEDE Aruba and Oranjestad and of course a lot of volunteers from the "Aruba Doet" project.

Centro Hubenil Washington enjoyed special discounts from Dijtham and Kooyman and also received a delicious treat from Superfood.

The playground will be reopened as soon as the paint is properly dried. The Center invites all parents to bring their kids to play. The place is open to the public and is free of charge.

Malaysia: missing jet crashed at sea

KUALA LUMPUR (AFP) - Malaysia said yesterday its missing airliner had crashed in the Indian Ocean, extinguishing the hopes of relatives of those on board but shedding no light on why it veered so far off course.

A sombre Prime Minister Najib Razak said a new analysis of satellite data on Malaysia Airlines flight MH370's path placed its last position in remote waters off Australia's west coast, "far from any possible landing sites."

"It is therefore with deep sadness and regret that I must inform you that, according to this new data, flight MH370 ended in the southern Indian Ocean," Najib said.

The plane went missing on March 8 with 239 people aboard -- two thirds of them Chinese -- en route from Kuala Lumpur to Beijing.

A text message sent to relatives ahead of Najib's announcement said that "we have to assume beyond any reasonable doubt that MH370 has been lost and that none of

those on board survived".

The announcement touched off deep despair among relatives in both cities.

The premier said Monday's conclusions were reached based on new analysis of satellite data by Britain's Air Accidents Investigation Branch (AAIB), and the satellite telecommunications firm Inmarsat.

He gave no specifics such as precisely where the plane may have been lost.

West to hit back at Russia over the Ukraine



THE HAGUE -- World leaders sit at a round table during the G7 meeting at the working residence Catshuis in The Hague, The Netherlands on Monday to discuss the situation in the Ukraine. US President Barack Obama gathered his allies in The Hague to hammer out a response to Russia's lightning annexation of Crimea, as the Ukraine pulled its last troops from the peninsula. Ahead of the talks, Obama stressed that Europe and the United States were "united in our support of the Ukrainian government and the Ukrainian people" and "united in imposing a cost on Russia for its actions so far". In Crimea, Russian forces stormed a Ukrainian navy ship, with an AFP correspondent reporting plumes of smoke as a Ukrainian defence spokesman said the crew had fired smoke grenades in self-defence.



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Eight killed, 108 unaccounted for in huge US landslide

ARLINGTON (AFP) - More than 100 people remained unaccounted for yesterday after a devastating landslide in the US state of Washington which killed at least eight and sounded "like a small earthquake," witnesses said.

The number rose dramatically from 18 to 108 after the massive landslide slammed into a mountainside town in Snohomish County north of Seattle on Saturday.

"The situation is very grim," said Snohomish County fire district chief Travis Hots. "We're holding out hope that we'll find people that are still alive, but we haven't found anyone alive since Saturday."

Emergency management chief John Pennington stressed that 108 is the number of reported missing or unaccounted for, not necessarily actually missing after the disaster on Saturday adding that there were a total of 49 dwellings of various types in the area hit by the devastating landslide, and that there were likely to have been more people at home on a Saturday than during the week.

The wall of mud, rocks and trees smashed into the rural town of Oso, northeast of Seattle in the northwestern US state, destroying houses and part of a highway.

Some 100 emergency workers were searching for survivors in the field of mud and rubble across and some four to six meters deep in areas.

US deploys 'black box' locator in Malaysian jet search

WASHINGTON (AFP) - The US military yesterday sent a black box locator and a robotic underwater vehicle to the Indian Ocean to help search for the missing Malaysian jet, after a series of debris sightings.

The locator system, which relies on acoustic signals to track down flight recorders, and the Bluefin-21, an unmanned device that can scan the ocean's depths, were flown to Perth, Australia as a "prudent" step, officials said.

The head of Pacific Command, Admiral Samuel Locklear, "made a very prudent and wise decision to move the equipment that could be useful should a debris field be found or should we think we can get close to where the

black box may be," Pentagon spokesman Rear Admiral John Kirby told reporters.

"I think it's really important for everybody to understand that it's being sent there to be ready should there be a need, and right now there's no need. We do not have a debris field," Kirby said.

If debris from the flight is confirmed, the US Navy's "Towed Pinger Locator 25 will add a significant advantage in locating the missing Malaysian aircraft's black box," Commander William Marks, a spokesman for the US Seventh Fleet, said in an earlier statement.

The Bluefin will be launched from an Australian commercial ship, Kirby said.



PERU, Lima : Venezuelan opposition deputy Maria Corina Machado speaks during a seminar on democracy in Latin America on March 24, 2014 in Lima. The President of Venezuela's national Assembly, Diosdado Cabello, said Monday that Machado lost her status of deputy after she attempted to speak during the Organization of American States meeting on Friday 21. Machado said that as an elected member of parliament, she will continue to exercise her role. (AFP PHOTO)

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US 'shocked' by Egypt death sentences

WASHINGTON (AFP) - The United States expressed shock Monday after an Egyptian court handed down death sentences against 529 supporters of Egypt's deposed president Mohamed Morsi after a two-day trial.

An Egyptian court handed down the sentences earlier Monday, amid a sweeping crackdown on supporters of the Islamist president, who was overthrown by the army last July.

Harf questioned whether the defendants could have received a trial in accordance with international norms.

The largest mass sentencing in the country's history was related to the death of a policeman and other violence in the aftermath of the clearing of two squares last August.

Harf said the United States was raising the issue of Monday's sentences with the Egyptian government.

The official, citing reports of violence in response to the sentences, warned that such a reaction would not help either.

The United States partially suspended its \$1.5 billion in annual aid to longtime ally Egypt, much of it to the military, after last summer's crackdown on the opposition.

Since then, it has regularly criticized the new interim government for the slow transition to democracy and its poor record on human rights and public liberties.

But the US administration has never declared Morsi's overthrow a coup, and even US Secretary of State John Kerry has contended that the army acted as it did to save democracy.

Harf said the United States would continue to engage Egypt in future, saying Washington regarded its links with Cairo as an "important relationship" and there was no desire to "completely cut off" relations.

However the US would stand up for principles "that include things like right to a free and fair trial that we will continue pushing with the Egyptian government."



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G7 snubs Russia summit over Ukraine crisis

THE HAGUE- (AFP) - The G7 group of top economic powers on Monday scrapped a planned meeting to be hosted by Russia as they sought to deepen Moscow's isolation over the Ukraine crisis.

After emergency talks called by US President Barack Obama, the G7 said they would hold a meeting in Brussels without Russia instead of the wider G8 summit that was to have taken place in Sochi.

The G7 also threatened tougher sanctions against Russia for its annexation of Crimea, which has plunged

relations between the West and Moscow to their lowest point since the end of the Cold War.

The meeting in The Hague came as Ukraine ordered its outnumbered troops to withdraw from Crimea as yet another of its bases was stormed and the White House said it was "very concerned" by the Russian troop build-up on the border.

The G7 "came together because of shared beliefs and shared responsibilities. Russia's actions in recent weeks are not consistent with them. Under these circumstances, we will not participate in the

planned Sochi summit," they added.

But Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov defiantly dismissed such a move as "no great tragedy" after separate talks with US Secretary of State John Kerry and Ukraine's interim Foreign Minister Andriy Deshchysya.

"If our Western partners think that this format (the G8) has outlived itself, then so be it," Lavrov told reporters.

"We are not trying to hold on to this format, and we see no great tragedy if it does not meet," Lavrov said, insisting that Crimea has "a right to

self-determination".

Russia's takeover of the region was not "malicious intent", said Lavrov, but was to "protect the Russians who have been living there for hundreds of years".

Moscow was added to the G7 club of the US, Japan, Germany, Italy, France, Canada and Britain -- seen as the world's top diplomatic and economic table -- in 1999 as a reward for choosing the path of democracy after the collapse of Communism.

French Foreign Minister Laurent Fabius said the snubbing of Russia was "perhaps the most significant action because it shows that all these different countries have not accepted the annexation of Crimea as a fait accompli".

Fabius stressed that the G7 had agreed to work out how to reduce their energy dependency on Russia.

"Because when we talk about sanctions, possible reactions, energy questions must be asked," Fabius said.

In Crimea, Russian forces stormed a Ukrainian navy ship.

Ukraine's interim foreign minister stressed that Kiev still sought to resolve the crisis through diplomacy.

Bodies and skulls found in Nigerian 'House of Horror'

LAGOS (AFP) - Nigerian police said they have opened a murder probe after the discovery of rotting bodies and skeletons in an abandoned building the media has branded a "House of Horror". Police also rescued several severely malnourished people found wandering in the bush near the building in the southwestern city of Ibadan, and more were found shackled in leg-chains inside. The grisly discovery came after a group of motorcycle taxi riders reported that some of their members had gone missing and were believed to have been kidnapped. Some victims of kidnapping in Nigeria are often tortured or sacrificed in black magic rituals. Local media have also reported cases of human body parts being sold across the country, especially in the southern region, for ritual purposes.





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Children call Australian immigration detention 'hell'



SYDNEY (AFP) - Children held in immigration detention in Australia have described conditions as "hell" with a human rights inquiry Monday detailing many banging their heads, biting themselves and wetting their beds.

The Australian Human Rights Commission gained access to Australia's main detention centre for asylum-seekers on Christmas Island as part of its National Inquiry into Children in Immigration Detention.

Commission President Gillian Triggs said what the team -- which included a paediatrician and a child psychiatrist -- found was disturbing, with most of the 315 children there at the time having been held for six to eight months.

They noted that most of the children were visibly distressed during their recent visit.

The children told the inquiry "this place is hell", "help me get out of here" and "there's no school, nowhere to play and nothing to do," the commission said.

They also spoke about their distress at living in a closed environment with adults who were sad, angry

and sometimes attempting self-harm.

"The overwhelming sense is of the enormous anxiety, depression, mental illness but particularly developmental retardation," Triggs told the Australian Broadcasting Corporation. "The children are stopping talking. You can see a little girl comes up to you and she is just staring at you but won't communicate."

Paediatrician Karen Zwi and child psychiatrist Sarah Mares said that being detained was taking its toll with recorded instances of children biting and banging their heads.

Under Canberra's punitive offshore detention policy, any asylum-seeker arriving by boat or intercepted at sea is eventually transferred to camps in Nauru or Papua New Guinea for processing and permanent resettlement outside Australia.

Triggs stressed that Australia had obligations under international human rights law to detain children only as a measure of last resort and to ensure they were protected from harm.

Immigration Minister Scott Morrison was not immediately available for comment.

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US top court weighs religious rights over birth control



WASHINGTON (AFP) - Hobby Lobby's 556 arts and crafts stores across the United States are closed on Sundays, and billionaire CEO David Green says the chain's true owner is God.

His religious beliefs put him at odds with health care laws demanding the company provide contraceptive options in its employee health plans. And so US Supreme Court justices will hear oral arguments today in a high-stakes religious freedom case brought by Green's firm.

Green says his company, which follows "biblical principles" and thanks "God's grace and provision" for its success, cannot comply with the Affordable Care Act rules brought about by President Barack Obama's sweeping health care overhaul.

Green is defending his company's objections to requirements it provide specific emergency contraceptives and intrauterine devices to its 28,000 employees.

"These abortion-causing drugs go against our faith and our family is now being forced to choose between following the laws of the land that we love or maintaining the religious beliefs that have made our business successful and have supported our family and thousands of our employees and their families," Green has said.

The so-called Obamacare law has been the subject of fierce criticism since its shaky introduction in October, and companies have filed dozens of lawsuits in federal courts challenging the

law's birth control coverage.

Green's religious freedom case, which marks the second time the Supreme Court is examining a challenge to the health law, could have broad implications for other companies claiming they are entitled to the same religious protections as churches or people.

Although Hobby Lobby does cover most types of contraception in its employee health plan, it equates certain emergency contraceptives -- required under Obama's health care law, such as the morning-after pill -- with abortion.

Hobby Lobby's Christian education business Mardel is also part of the suit, which is being heard alongside another from Conestoga Wood Specialties Corp., a Pennsylvania cabinetmaker whose owners say they run the company based on their Mennonite Christian values.

The court, which often sides with businesses, will also have to look back at its 2010 Citizens United decision in which it found that corporations had free speech rights that shield them from political-spending limits.

A decision is expected in late June.



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'Divergent' pulls away from box-office rivals

WASHINGTON (AFP) - Sci-fi thriller "Divergent" pulled apart from rivals at the North American box office in its first weekend, as "Muppets Most Wanted" went in at number two, industry estimates showed Sunday.

Raking in an estimated \$56 million, "Divergent," the dystopian tale of a young woman in a futuristic society, is based on the popular young adult novel of the same name.

The film easily beat out the latest Muppets installment, which earned \$16.5 million in its first weekend, figures from Exhibitor Relations showed.

Tina Fey, Ty Burrell and Ricky Gervais star in a European adventure in which a Russian-accented Kermit look-alike takes the Muppet gang for a ride.

Coming in third was animated film "Mr Peabody &



Sherman," based on characters from the 1960s television cartoon "Rocky and Bullwinkle." Slipping from last week's first-place spot, the film earned \$11.7 million in its third weekend.

Ancient Greece fantasy-action movie "300: Rise of an Empire," the gory follow-up to the 2007 hit "300," landed in fourth with \$8.67

million.

In its first weekend in theaters, the religiously themed "God's Not Dead," which tells the story of a college freshman who debates with his atheist philosophy professor, debuted in fifth place with \$8.56 million.

And fast-paced, car-chase action movie "Need for Speed," inspired by the videogame of the same name, earned \$7.8 million, falling from third to sixth.

Wes Anderson's quirky "The Grand Budapest Hotel" climbed one spot to seventh with just under \$6.8 million.

And eighth place went to "Non-Stop," the Liam Neeson action movie set on a long-haul flight. The film added another \$6.3 million to its total earnings.

TED turns 30 with new chapter of 'ideas worth spreading'

TED Ideas worth spreading

VANCOUVER (AFP) - TED turns 30 years old with a mind-sizzling mix of intrigue, wonder and passion in the renowned gathering's new home in Canada. A conference born in California in 1984 that grew into a global forum for heady "ideas worth spreading" ended Friday after gazing thoughtfully at the past and looking optimistically ahead. "The platform has gotten more interesting to more people," Technology, Entertainment, Design (TED) curator Chris Anderson told AFP. TED has won a global following for trademark "talks" during which the brilliant, innovative, artistic or accomplished deliver thought-sparking presentations in 18 minutes or less. Topics at the five-day TED gathering ranged from mind-controlling parasites and bionic limbs to intestinal microbes and collective consciousness. Female fashion model Geena Rocero used the TED stage to, for the first time, tell how she was born a boy in the Philippines but become a woman to match her "inner truth." "Some of my neighbors, friends, colleagues, even my agent didn't know about my history," Rocero said on the TED stage. Internet spying and online privacy were hot topics at the gathering, known for attracting Internet entrepreneurs such as founders of Google, Amazon, and Netflix. That debate was set ablaze by the surprise appearance of US former National Security Agency contractor Edward Snowden in the form of a robot controlled remotely from his hideaway in Russia. Snowden's virtual visit to TED, and his promise of sensational new revelations to come, prompted the NSA to weigh in via video link a day later to argue that his "arrogance" has put lives at risk and terrorists on guard.






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Google Now On Chrome For Desktop Users



NEW YORK - The new feature will allow users to receive Google Now notifications on their desktop, and syncing will be done with the Google Now notifications from your phone.

To enable this feature, you don't need to configure any extra settings, but you'll only need to ensure that you're logged in to Chrome using the same email address as on your iOS or Android smartphone. If you've already done this, and once an update arrives, you'll be able to see notifications and cards popping up in your

Chrome browser.

Google Now cards include stuff like sports scores, weather, traffic and event reminders, and notifications from these will be displayed on your Chrome browser.

This integration between Google Now and Chrome desktop yet again signals that Google is interested in bringing its mobile and desktop platform together. Showing Now notifications in Chrome is smart, but we just hope that these notifications don't become annoying and disturb us in our work.

N.Korea warns US anew of nuclear 'measures'

UNITED NATIONS (AFP) - North Korea on Monday fired a fresh warning that it would take nuclear "measures" if the United States does not end what the communist state described as provocations.

North Korea's ambassador to the United Nations, Ri Tong-Li, said that Pyongyang was "ready" with measures that would "demonstrate the power of the self-defensive nuclear deterrent."

Asked at a news conference for more detail, Ri said: "We are keeping ourselves restrained from taking the additional measures, but it is totally dependent on the attitude of the US."

North Korea earlier this month also threatened to react against US "blackmail," although think tanks that assess satellite imagery said there was no sign of an imminent nuclear or long-range missile test.

North Korea, however, has carried out a series of short-range missile tests. Ri described the maneuvers as

"routine" and said that it was instead the United States which was "hellbent on provocations" through joint exercises with ally South Korea.

Ri also accused the United States of "human rights conspiracies" after a UN commission last month said that North Korea was carrying out executions, forced labor and other abuses so pervasive that they draw parallels to Nazi Germany's crimes against humanity.

Ri said that the United States was "clinging on the issue of human rights" after efforts to stop North Korea's nuclear program failed. Ri accused South Korea's non-governmental organizations of "brainwashing" North Koreans, who often report abuses after defecting.

The UN Commission of Inquiry said that North Korea did not cooperate and that it based its findings on research that included 240 confidential interviews and public testimony from 80 witnesses.

Video games linked to aggressive behavior in kids: study



WASHINGTON (AFP) - Youths who play video games are more likely to think and act in aggressive ways, suggested a study out Monday of more than 3,000 schoolchildren in Singapore.

The research, published in JAMA Pediatrics, a journal of the American Medical Association, was based on more than 3,034 children who were studied over the course of three years.

Frequent use of video games was linked to higher rates of aggressive behaviors and thoughts, according to self-reported answers to survey questions by the children.

The participants' average age was 11 at the start of the study, and three-quarters of them were boys.

The study also found that answers were similar among boys and girls, and that parental involvement was not likely to change behavior.

The researchers said their

findings support previous research that has shown a link between video games and aggression.

"This study found that habitual violent video game playing increases long-term aggressive behavior by producing general changes in aggressive cognition, and this occurs regardless of sex, age, initial aggressiveness or parental involvement," said the study which was led by researchers at the National Institute of Education in Singapore and the Iowa State University department of psychology.

Participants were asked to respond to six questions about aggressive behavior, such as, "When someone has angered or provoked me in some way, I have reacted by hitting that person." Responses were given on a scale of one to four, ranging from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree."

Three questions on hostile thoughts were included, such as, "Suppose a boy says something bad to another boy John. Is it wrong for John to hit him?" Answers were also given on a four-point scale, from "really wrong" to "perfectly okay."

Outside experts questioned the methodology of using self-reported answers rather than measuring behavior itself, and said the study does not prove that violent video games caused aggressive behavior in the youths.

"This study shows an association, of unclear magnitude, of violent video game-playing with subsequent aggressive behavior," said David Spiegelhalter, a professor at the University of Cambridge, who was not involved in the study.

"It does not, and cannot, show that the association is causal."

Eurozone business activity grows in March, survey shows

BRUSSELS (AFP) - Eurozone business activity remains on the path of recovery, a key survey showed Monday, registering in March its strongest period of growth since the first semester of 2011.

Boosted by good news from France, the Eurozone Composite Purchasing Managers Index reached 53.2 in March and follows a 53.3 reading in February. A reading above 50 represents expansion.

And with a slight acceleration in new order growth, the data suggests activity growth could continue in April.

According to the PMI figures compiled by Markit

Economics, eurozone employment also rose marginally for the second month in a row, providing the first signs of job creation since June 2011.

The biggest change over the month was seen in France, where output and new orders returned to growth -- the best monthly showing for both indicators since August 2011.

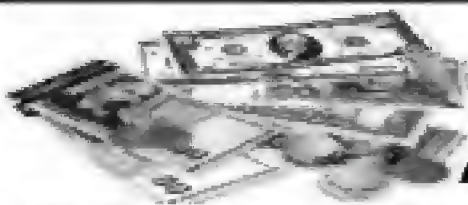

Germany saw its output growth slow to a four-month low, although the rate of expansion overall remains solid with employment in both manufacturing and services rising for a fifth straight month.

According to Martin van Vliet, from Global Econom-

ics ING, the fact that eurozone growth held up despite turbulence caused by security concerns in Ukraine was "welcome and fairly surprising" news.

But he warned in a statement that a weakening of China's PMI, along with a relatively strong euro, "do not bode well for export growth momentum," while unemployment and fiscal policy settings mean domestic demand is unlikely to pick up soon.

"That said, the further sign of recovery will encourage the ECB in refraining from further monetary easing, at least in the short term," van Vliet said.

Daily Exchange Rates

Current as of:
03/24/2014

| | Currency Code | Buying rate banknotes | Buying Cheques | Selling Rate |
|----------------|---------------|-----------------------|----------------|--------------|
| U.S.A. | USD | 1.77 | 1.78 | 1.80 |
| Dutch Antilles | ANG | 98.00 | 100.00 | 100.20 |
| Canada | CAD | 1.57 | 1.59 | 1.61 |
| Britain | GBP | 2.87 | 2.92 | 2.98 |
| Switzerland | CHF | 201.02 | 201.74 | 202.54 |
| Netherlands | EUR | 243.10 | 245.32 | 247.79 |
| Sweden | SEK | 26.70 | 27.42 | 28.22 |
| Denmark | DKK | 31.91 | 32.63 | 33.43 |
| Norway | NOK | 28.41 | 29.13 | 29.93 |
| Japan | JPY | 172.35 | 173.93 | 175.67 |

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Medical Tourism presents Economic Growth Potential for the Caribbean

NEW YORK -- The Caribbean region can boost its bottom line by developing a medical tourism product that takes advantage of its brand as a great vacation destination, its proximity to North America as well as its tourism facilities, beaches and of course, the year-round warm weather of the region.

That's according to Dr. Paul Angelchik, founder of American World Clinics, and Collin Childress, CEO of Global MedChoices. Their comments come as both prepare to discuss the potential of medical tourism for the Caribbean in-depth at a panel at Invest Caribbean Now 2014.

ICN, the biggest global investment summit on the Caribbean outside of the region, is set for the Harvard Club in New York City from 11:30 a.m. to 6:30 p.m. this June 4th under the patronage

of Hollywood Actor Malik Yoba.

"The opportunity for the Caribbean in general is that it carries a positive connotation in the view of many for having friendly people, natural beauty and a reputation as an enjoyable, upscale destination with great visitor amenities in many locations," commented Dr. Angelchik. "I have no doubt that the Caribbean can be a major region for MT activities if there is follow through on the initial buzz of enthusiasm that has defined the industry to date."

"Creating the opportunity for economic diversification through introducing a sustainable development and growth industry, such as medical tourism, to the Caribbean can help soften the impact of cyclical North American economic downturns in tourism on the Caribbean market and leverage the supply and demand issues that are driving patient flow offshore from Canada and the US," added CEO Childress.

In 2011, the total impact of the medical tourism industry contributed 9 percent of global GDP (over \$6 trillion USD) and accounted for 255 million jobs in the world. In the next decade, medical tourism is expected to grow by an average yearly of 4 percent, contributing up to 10 percent of future global GDP (\$10 trillion). Eventually, by 2022, it is estimated that 328 million jobs will be created in the medical tourism industry, equal to 10 percent of jobs in the world.

Jackie Chan promoting PPA in Ethiopia



HAWASSA, Ethiopia -- : AFP photo shows Hong Kong actor Jackie Chan visiting a farm as part of the Purchase from Africans for Africa Program (PAA), South-South Cooperation Project, in Hawassa.

Copied from Brazil, FAO has Purchase from Africans for Africa (PAA), a program that buys cereals and vegetables from small-holder farmers to supply feeding programs made to schools. FAO and the World Food Program (WFP) jointly run PAA in Boricha Wereda of the Southern Regional State, targeting 2,000 farmers.

WFP distributes the food bought through this program to 8,000 students in seven primary schools.

EU offers 2.5-bn-euro aid package for Latin America

BRUSSELS (AFP) - The European Union is to offer Latin America 2.5 billion euros (\$3.4 billion) in development aid over the next seven years to fund projects ranging from security to education.

The EU's Development Commissioner Andris Piebalgs said "this aid package marks a new step in the way we work with Latin

America, and sends a very strong signal of our commitment to continuing to support the region's development efforts."

The 2014-2020 funding includes assistance for regional programs and bilateral schemes.

The aid will be focused on security, good governance and accountability, environmental projects and education and training programmes for the young.

A sub-regional programme for Central America is also included.

A total of 18 countries are eligible for the funding -- Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Uruguay and Venezuela.

YESTERDAY'S Crossword Answer

| | | |
|---------|---------|-----|
| MVP | CZAR | OAT |
| AIR | RADIO | HBO |
| IVE | EPSOM | NUN |
| DASHES | EMOTE | |
| TAD | EGGO | |
| BLISS | DEADPAN | |
| RIG | AGT | ERR |
| OPERATE | GOTTA | |
| ALES | ONS | |
| SPIED | HUTTON | |
| WAS | EMAIL | ONE |
| ALI | NOTRE | RIM |
| YES | POET | ETO |



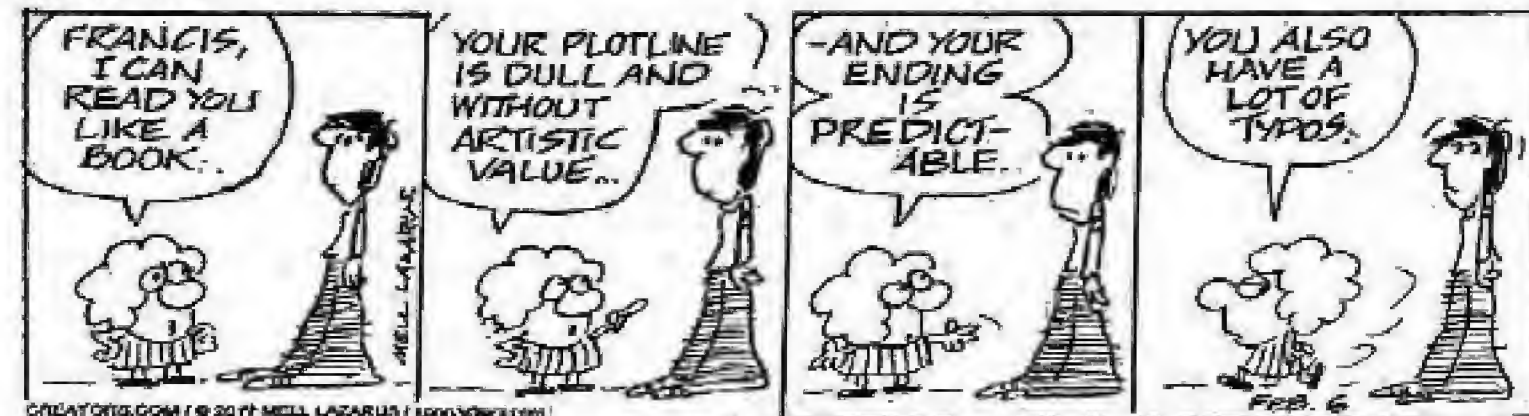
CARACAS -- View of US dollar banknotes, in Caracas on March 24, 2014. The Venezuelan government postponed another week the entry into force of the new exchange market announced more than a month ago to control the "black dollar", in a context of inflation and shortages, leading causes of the protests against President Nicolas Maduro which have so far caused 31 deaths. (AFP PHOTO)

COMICS

PICKLES



MOMMA



CALVIN and HOBBS

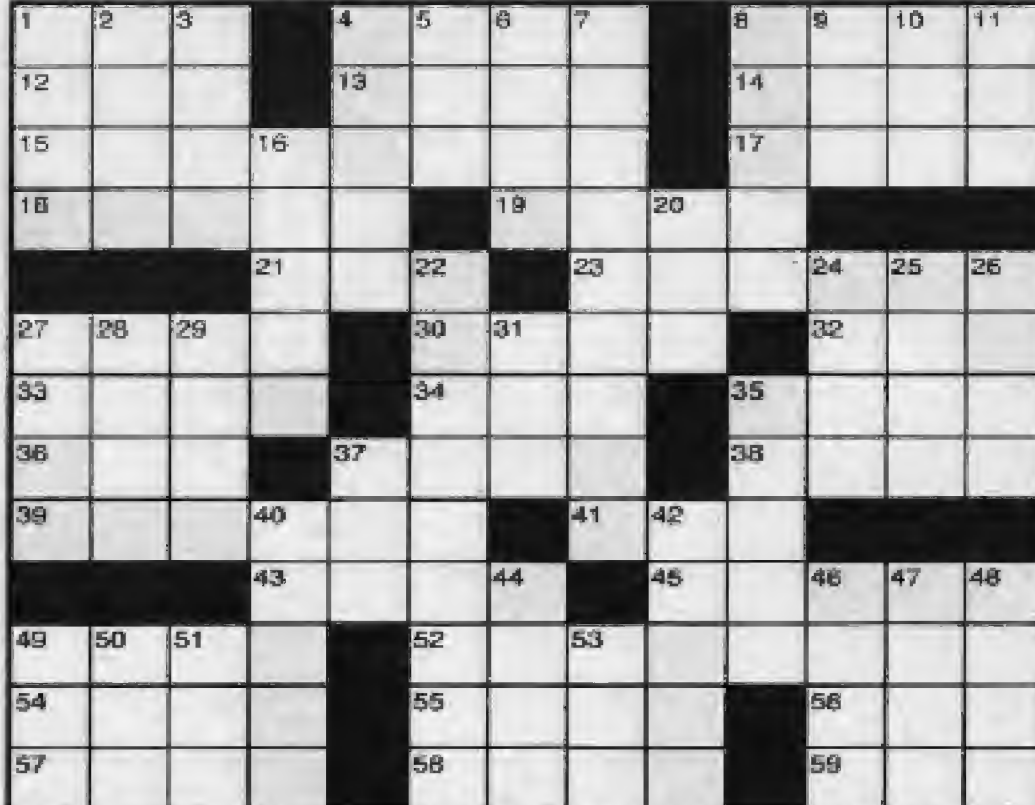


CROSSWORD

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ACROSS

1. Those holding power
4. Stepped on
8. Fido's nuisance
12. Hanoi holiday
13. Roam
14. Enjoy Dickens
15. Keepsake
17. Sgt. Snorkel's pooch
18. Diva Moffo et al.
19. Not Reps. or Inds.
21. Computer's ___ port
23. Soapsuds
27. Hamburger holder
30. Entertainer Adams
32. Onassis, informally
33. Sad news item, for short
34. Detective, informally
35. Swab (hyph.)
36. Off ___ good start (2 wds.)
37. The thing there
38. Milit. school
39. ___ tea
41. Chem., e.g.
43. Film holder
45. Type of pear
49. Dull, steady



52. Mesh head-coverings
54. Tabby's cry
55. Actor Lincoln
56. Lower the lights
57. Heights (abbr.)
58. Sir's counterpart
59. "This ___ recording" (2 wds.)
7. Bums
8. Frozen dew
9. "___ It Be" (Beatles song)
10. Consume
11. Uproar
16. Bank's chamber
20. Daisy ___
22. "O Little Town of ___"
24. Caps
25. "___ Brockovich"
26. Talk show cohost Kelly
27. Author Philip ("Goodbye, Columbus")
28. Mitch Miller's instrument
29. Pinocchio, e.g.
31. Narc's org.
35. "Zorba" actor Anthony
37. Edison's monogram
40. Makes beer
42. Strike and rebound, as a ball
44. Tra followers (hyph.)
46. "Star Wars" knight
47. Elevator inventor
48. West Point (abbr.)
49. Medical gp.
50. Animation unit
51. Sizzling
53. "___ Believer" (2 wds.)

DOWN

1. "___ girl!" (2 wds.)
2. Display light
3. Astound
4. Curl
5. Director Howard
6. Ancient Roman poet

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Sudoku

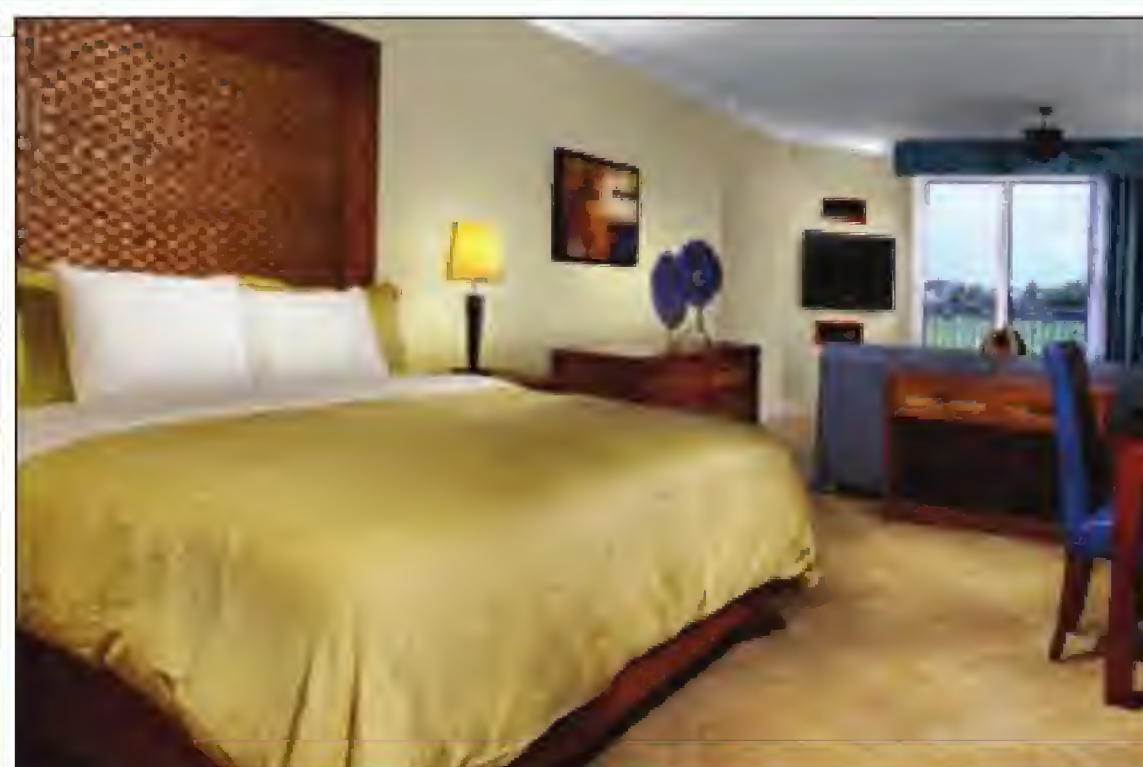
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| | | 6 | 1 | | 7 | 2 | | | | | |
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| 6 | | 9 | 7 | | | | | | | | |
| | | | | 3 | 4 | | | 8 | | | |

SOLUTION

| | | | | | | | | |
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| 1 | 8 | 9 | 7 | 6 | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 |
| 2 | 6 | 5 | 3 | 1 | 2 | 9 | 8 | 7 |
| 3 | 8 | 1 | 5 | 9 | 8 | 6 | 4 | 7 |
| 4 | 7 | 6 | 9 | 8 | 5 | 2 | 6 | 1 |
| 5 | 9 | 2 | 1 | 6 | 1 | 9 | 7 | 5 |
| 6 | 2 | 6 | 3 | 2 | 7 | 1 | 5 | 8 |
| 7 | 3 | 9 | 6 | 7 | 6 | 2 | 9 | 1 |
| 8 | 1 | 4 | 2 | 3 | 5 | 8 | 7 | 6 |
| 9 | 1 | 2 | 9 | 9 | 7 | 3 | 2 | 8 |

Complete the grid so that every row and every column contains the numbers 1 through 9
A number is Never repeated in a row or column.
In addition every rectangle must contain the numbers 1 through 9

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5 Burgers Aruba: Now your best breakfast bargain!



Delicious Breakfast

--A favorite stop for a great burger for lunch or dinner has just expanded their hours and menu to offer some of the best breakfast bargains to be found in Palm Beach. Owners Aaron and Rosie Walisever are living their dream: a home on para-

dise while welcoming all and sundry to their proud undertaking, 5 Burgers Aruba. The couple's fanatical dedication to giving their customers what they really want has resulted in a unique menu from an internationally known franchise with a "5", which now includes breakfast.

"You never get a second chance to make a first impression," believes Aaron. Upon entering 5 Burgers Aruba in The Village Mall in Palm Beach, one is struck by utterly spotless surroundings and a smiling, friendly, attentive service crew. Of course, the main item on the menu is burgers-the way they were meant to be, thick and juicy, made fresh daily and 100% pure beef, the kind that made the hamburger a traditional American treat.

However, beginning at 8am, patrons can now order 2

eggs any style (omelets with 3 fillings are \$7.99) and toast for a price of only \$4.99 or All You Can Eat Pancakes for \$6.99! A new plate called the "Home Run" comes with 2 eggs, bacon or sausage, 2 pancakes, toast & home fries - for only \$9.99! Best of all - unlimited coffee or tea - that is, refillable and never ending is only \$.79! Breakfast is served from 8am until noon. Famous for their fries made from fresh potatoes, Aaron has been working for months on devising the most irresistible home fries recipe, chunky and tender with skins still on; after much testing and tasting, he got the thumbs up from his harshest critic, Rosie; so this is another treat you have to try.

A glance at their burger menu will certainly tempt you to return for lunch or dinner, to sample their famous specialty items such as the Gouda, Farmer's or Man Burger (almost 12 ounces of choice

beef), and a Western Burger with Aaron's secret-recipe crispy onion rings. All of these can be personalized with an incredible array of toppings, (mushrooms, jala-peño peppers, bacon, cheese, lettuce, tomato...whatever, the list goes on) at absolutely no extra cost.



5 Burger portions are ENORMOUS! Aaron suggests that even their small serving of fries is enough to be shared by two. He was very amused to watch a famous French chef demonstrating the best way to

make fried potatoes on a gourmet cooking show and could only comment "He stole my recipe!"

Try them the English way-with vinegar, and you'll wonder how you ever ate fries without it. This same 5-star chef also swears by Gouda as the best topping for the ideal gourmet cheeseburger.

5 Burgers is now open early until 10-ish Sunday-Thursday; and until 3am on Friday & Saturdays.

Delivery is available to most Hotels and most beaches! Enjoy a great lunch without ever leaving the beach by calling 586-3904. However, we suggest you stop by and enjoy their authentic,

heartfelt hospitality; it is not unusual for either owner to sit and chat, sharing their knowledge of the island while making sure patrons are happy with their meal.

Tennis: Serena breezes, Sharapova battles on at Miami

MIAMI (AFP) - World number one Serena Williams breezed into the quarter-finals of the WTA and ATP Miami Masters on Monday while Russian fourth seed Maria Sharapova battled through three sets to advance.

Top-seeded defending champion Williams routed US qualifier Coco Vandeweghe 6-3, 6-1 in 78 minutes to book a last-eight matchup with German fifth seed Angelique Kerber.

Sharapova rallied to defeat Belgium's Kirsten Flipkens 3-6, 6-4, 6-1 after two hours and four minutes while Kerber took six minutes longer to eliminate Russia's Ekaterina Makarova 6-4, 1-6, 6-3.

Williams smashed 17 winners to only 11 unforced errors and denied her compatriot on all six of her break-point chances to book her 13th quarter-final in 14 Miami appearances.

Williams owns a 3-1 career edge over Kerber, whose lone win came two years ago on Cincinnati hardcourts.

Four-time Grand Slam champion Sharapova, a five-time Miami runner-up, is still seeking her first title at the



hardcourt event.

Sharapova made 10 double faults, half of them in the first set, and served no aces but improved as the match progressed and in the final set won five of 12 points off the Belgian's first serve and seven of nine off her second serves.

Men's world number one Rafael Nadal was set to meet Uzbekistan's Denis Istomin in a later men's third-round match-up.

Canadian 12th seed Milos Raonic blasted 10 aces in defeating Spaniard Guillermo Garcia-Lopez 6-1, 6-2 in 56 minutes.

The Montenegrin-born big

server, who dropped only five points on his serve in the match, reached the last 16 at Miami for the first time after being forced to withdraw from third-round matches with injuries the past two years.

He next faces German Benjamin Becker, who ousted Slovenia's Aljaz Bedene 6-3, 7-5.

Ukraine's Alexandr Dolgoplov waited through a third-set rain delay before dispatching Serbian Dusan Lajovic 3-6, 6-0, 7-6 (7/5). Dolgoplov could face reigning Australian Open champion Stanislas Wawrinka in the fourth round.

Football: Blunder ref Marriner escapes Premier League demotion

LONDON (AFP) - Referee Andre Marriner was spared demotion from the Premier League list for his mistaken identity blunder at Stamford Bridge when it was announced Monday he would be in charge of the match between Southampton and Newcastle at St Mary's on Saturday.

In the midst of Premier League leaders Chelsea's 6-0 thrashing of London rivals Arsenal last Saturday, Marriner sent off the Gunners' Kieran Gibbs for handling a goal-bound shot on the line when it was Alex Oxlade-Chamberlain who had com-

mitted the infringement.

Eden Hazard duly put Chelsea 3-0 ahead from the ensuing penalty.

Marriner later apologised for his error, which led victorious Blues manager Jose Mourinho to re-iterate his plea for officials to be given access to video technology.

However, that cut little ice with Clive Thomas, one of British football's most respected referees.

It may be more 30 years since the 77-year-old Welshman, nicknamed 'The Book' for his strict adherence to football's rules last controlled a senior match, but Thomas

was in no doubt that Marriner and his linesmen should all face a lengthy ban.

However, Dermot Gallagher -- a more recently retired referee -- disagreed with Thomas and said a lengthy ban was the last thing the 43-year-old Marriner needed.

In a statement released after the game, Professional Game Match Officials Limited said: "Andre is an experienced referee and is obviously disappointed that an error of mistaken identity was made in this case...He expressed his disappointment to Arsenal when he was made aware of the issue."

Marriner was in charge when Wigan beat Manchester City 1-0 in last year's FA Cup final at Wembley.

And Roberto Martinez, Wigan boss that day but now the manager of Everton, came to the West Midlands referee's defence while distancing himself from Mourinho's plea for officials to be given greater technological help.



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PRETORIA (AFP) - Oscar Pistorius's girlfriend Reeva Steenkamp told the athlete he sometimes scared her in a text message sent less than three weeks before he shot her dead, his murder trial heard Monday. With the state moving to wrap up its case as the trial entered its fourth week, police cellphone expert Francois Moller read out exchanges that painted Pistorius as a critical and jealous boyfriend. The double amputee Paralympic gold medalist wept as the messages were shared with the court. Moller told the court that 90 percent of the messages between the couple were loving, but that in a long text on January 27 Steenkamp said the athlete had been picking on her "incessantly".



WASHINGTON (AFP) - World number one Tiger Woods said Monday he remains uncertain if he will be able to play in the Masters despite two weeks of rest and treatment for back spasms. Woods, a 14-time major champion chasing the all-time record 18 majors won by Jack Nicklaus, withdrew from last week's Arnold Palmer Invitational at Bay Hill, where he has won eight times including last year, due to nagging back pain. A year after he won five tournaments and appeared set for a solid run in the majors in 2014, his status for the Masters on April 10-13 remains in doubt even with a potential four weeks of rest for his aching back. The 38-year-old American struggled to a 78 in the final round of the World Golf Championships event at Doral earlier this month, visibly bothered by back pain over the final holes, and pulled out of the final round of the Honda Classic the week before.

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Boxing: Khan to fight Collazo on Mayweather undercard

LAS VEGAS (AFP) - England's Amir Khan, unhappy with Floyd Mayweather after being snubbed for a May 3 fight with the unbeaten US star, said Monday he will fight on the Mayweather undercard.

Khan will face US southpaw Luis Collazo ahead of Mayweather's match-up with Argentina's Marcos Maidana in Las Vegas.

The fight will be Khan's first moving up into the welterweight category and will in some ways be an audition for a big-money fight against Mayweather.

Last month, Khan took to Twitter to vent his anger with Mayweather after he was snubbed for Maidana having being forced to wait for months for the American to make up his mind.

Khan, 28-3 with 19 knockouts, has not fought since last April 27 and skipped a planned December bout with



US southpaw Devon Alexander for the International Boxing Federation title in anticipation of a big-money showdown with Mayweather.

Instead, it will be the longest layoff of his career, just over a year, before he climbs into the ring with Collazo, who is 35-5 with 18 knockouts.

Former world welterweight champion Collazo won by a second-round

knockout of Victor Ortiz in January.

Collazo sees this as a chance to book his own date with Mayweather, who is being wooed by Collazo's hometown arena in the Brooklyn section of New York to stage a bout there.

For his part, Mayweather posted a Twitter message saying his workouts under trainer Roger Mayweather were fine.

Brazil Taekwondo Foundation's transportation bus to get new paint job



ORANJESTAD - The bus that transports the kids to and from training of the Brazil Taekwondo Foundation is headed to the garage for essential repairs and a brand new paint job.

Since last week the bus arrived at the home of the parents of athletes Richelle and Patrick to begin the process of removing all the rust spots from the bus in preparation for the paint work. The work is being done by the parents of the children. This is something that doesn't happen often,

according to Robert Arends who is the driver of the bus.

During the time that the bus is out of circulation, parents will have to find alternative transportation for the kids to get to the training.

The Foundation is very pleased that the bus is getting this service. For some time the rust on the bus looked very dispicable. After the paint job it will return looking brand new. With its new stickers they claim it will, indeed, look like a Taekwondo bus.

Billionaire Prokhorov says transferring Brooklyn Nets ownership to Russia

MOSCOW (AFP) - Russian billionaire businessman Mikhail Prokhorov, owner of the Brooklyn Nets basketball franchise, said Monday he was transferring its ownership to Russia. As one of the richest Russians with assets abroad, Prokhorov could be vulnerable if the Western powers escalate economic sanctions against Russia over its takeover of Crimea. Prokhorov is the principal owner of the Brooklyn Nets through his Onexim Sports & Entertainment holding, according to the team's website. The Brooklyn Nets last year jumped in value 47 percent to \$780 million, making it the fifth most valuable National Basketball Association club.



Brazil to send troops to Rio for World Cup security

RIO DE JANEIRO (AFP) - Brazil will deploy the military in slums near Rio's international airport to back up police as the city braces for the arrival of hundreds of thousands of tourists for the World Cup, authorities said Monday.

Justice Minister Eduard Cardozo announced the reinforcements, without giving troop numbers nor the start date for the operation.

He spoke after a meeting with Rio Governor Sergio Cabral and the armed forces chief of staff, General Jose Carlos de Nardi, who is in charge of planning the deployment.

The move follows a spate of attacks on Rio police in slum areas despite an intensive, years long effort to "pacify" the densely packed neighborhoods.

With the World Cup kicking off on June 12, Rio turned to President Dilma Rousseff for federal help.

Cardozo said the focus of the troop deployment would be in the sprawling Mare favela near the Galeao international airport in northern Rio.

The favela, home to 100,000 people, is a haven for gang warfare and drug-dealing near what will be the main entry point for the flood of World Cup fans.

"There are weapons and drugs, stolen cars and motor bikes and criminals who take refuge there as if it were their territory," Cabral said.

Insisting Brazil was perfectly capable of hosting an estimated 600,000 foreign World Cup tourists, Cardozo said troops would "stay as long as necessary" until a 1,500-strong Police Pacification Unit can be established in Mare.

An advance force of 120 special police already has moved into the area, the officials said.

Cabral vowed that authorities would not shrink from the task of "pacifying" violent shanty towns.

Since 2003, more than 9,000 police officers have been deployed in 38 units to 'pacify' favelas in thrall to gangs and drug lords.

The Brazilian Air Force will declare no-fly zones over World Cup stadiums to prevent terrorist attacks during this year's soccer tournament.

The Air Force is asking the Brazilian government to



change the shoot-down law to allow effective defence of the air space during the 64 games of the June 12-July 13 global soccer tournament, said Air Force Brigadier Antonio Carlos Egito at a news conference. By law, Brazil's military can only shoot at unresponsive civilian planes on drug trafficking routes near its borders, but not over densely populated urban areas where games will be played in 12 cities.

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